

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-06

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

S E C R E T STATE 268224

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, ID

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS AND DETAINEES

1. IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH VISITING GENERAL MURDANI AND AMBASSADOR ROESMIN, DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS REITERATED SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH USG VIEWS CONTINUED LARGE-SCALE DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGES OR TRIAL. ARBITRARY DETENTION IS ONE OF FACTORS SPECIFICALLY CITED BY LEGISLATION AS CONSTITUTING "CONSISTENT PATTERN OF GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS." AS SUCH, IT CAN BE GROUNDS FOR U.S. OPPOSING LOANS TO A COUNTRY THROUGH INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (E.G., IBRD, ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK) AND AUTOMATICALLY WEIGHS HEAVILY IN CONSIDERATION BY CONGRESS AND ADMINISTRATION ON LEVELS OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (INCLUDING PL-480).

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2. IN THE CASE OF INDONESIA, THE ANNOUNCED DECISION TO RELEASE 10,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS BEFORE THE END OF 1977 AND TO ALLOW ICRC TO RESUME PRISON VISITS IN JANUARY 1978 ARE SEEN AS INDICATING AN ENCOURAGING TREND IN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. AS DEPT ASST SEC OAKLEY TESTIFIED BEFORE FRASER SUBCOMMITTEE (STATE 252726), DEPARTMENT OF STATE IS CONFIDENT THAT BOTH DECISIONS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AS

SCHEDULED. WHEN IMPLEMENTED, WE HOPE THEY WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY EFFECTIVE TO BE VIEWED AS A DISTINCTIVE DEPARTURE WARRANTING USG AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT.

3. DEPT UNDERSTANDS THAT THE PENDING RELEASE AND ICRC VISIT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN BY GOI FOR ITS OWN REASONS AND IN PURSUIT ITS DOMESTIC AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL POLICY GOALS. HOWEVER, WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO AMBASSADOR ROESMIN AND GENERAL MURDANI THE SERIOUS CLIMATE WHICH WOULD DEVELOP SHOULD GOI FOR WHATEVER REASONS NOT BE ABLE TO UNDERTAKE THE PRISONER RELEASE BEFORE END 1977 OR IF ICRC VISITS WERE NOT RESUMED AS EXPECTED IN JANUARY 1978. WE ARE AWARE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS THE RELEASE POSES, BUT ENGENDERING DOUBTS IN THIS COUNTRY AND ELSEWHERE AS TO GOI CREDIBILITY AND INTENT WOULD UNDERCUT USG SUPPORT OF GOI INTENTIONS AND IMMEASURABLY STRENGTHEN GOI CRITICS HERE AND ABROAD. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, THE POTENTIAL INTERNATIONAL COSTS TO INDONESIA WOULD FAR OUTWEIGH ANY TEMPORARY DOMESTIC CONVENIENCE. ROESMIN AND MURDANI APPEAR TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD OUR CONCERNS, INCLUDING FACT THAT USG IS FOCUSED ONLY ON WHAT GOI HAS ALREADY STATED ITS INTENTION TO DO. WHILE THE TIMING OF RELEASE IS CRITICAL, WE NEED ALSO KEEP IN MIND THAT THE QUALITY OF THE RELEASE PROGRAM WILL ALSO HAVE SUBSTANTIAL BEARING ON INTERNATIONAL REACTION.

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4. DEPT IS WELL AWARE FROM EMBASSY REPORTING AND ELSEWHERE THAT, GOI SENSITIVITY TO ANY USG PRESSURE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOW AT OR NEAR THE POINT OF POSSIBLY DAMAGING REACTIONS. ON OTHER HAND, WE WISH ENSURE THAT SERIOUSNESS OF CURRENT US CLIMATE IS FULLY UNDERSTOOD. EMBASSY SHOULD THUS ENSURE THAT KEY GOI OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF FACT THAT NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS ARE A POTENTIALLY CRITICAL PERIOD IN US-INDONESIAN RELATIONS. AMBASSADOR MASTERS WILL MAKE THESE POINTS IN HIS INITIAL CALLS BUT WE ALSO WISH PREEMPT ANY MOMENTUM WHICH MIGHT DEVELOP FOR DELAY OF DETAINEE RELEASES OR ICRC VISITS. EMBASSY MUST, OF COURSE, BE JUDGE OF HOW TO PURSUE THIS DELICATE BUT KEY TASK. LIM BIAN KIE MIGHT BE OF ASSISTANCE OR SUPPORT, GIVEN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND ATTITUDES OF BOTH CONGRESS AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH. BUT WE ALSO RECOGNIZE HIS LIMITATIONS. VANCE

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